



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Fiscal Note

Drafting Number:	LLS 22-0546	Date:	January 27, 2022
Prime Sponsors:	Rep. Bockenfeld Sen. Priola	Bill Status:	House Education
		Fiscal Analyst:	Josh Abram 303-866-3561 Josh.Abram@state.co.us

Bill Topic: PARENT AUTHORITY TO REQUEST PUBLIC SCHOOL REFORMS

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School District

The bill allows parents to petition a school district or the Charter School Institute to implement parent-specified reforms for low-performing schools. The bill increases state and school district workload and costs on an ongoing basis.

Appropriation Summary: No appropriation is required.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, a public school may operate up to five years under an improvement plan or a turnaround plan before the State Board of Education (SBE) is required to take corrective action. This bill allows the parents of students in a low performing public school, or whose students will matriculate to the low performing school, to petition the school district to implement parent-specified reforms. The bill specifies the reforms that can be requested in a petition.

Low-performing public schools are those that have been required to adopt a priority turnaround or turnaround plan for at least two consecutive years. Parents may petition the Charter School Institute (CSI) to implement reforms in a low performing CSI authorized charter school. A valid petition must be signed by at least 50 percent of eligible parents.

Parents must submit the signed petition to the local school board of the school district, or to the CSI. Within 14 days, the district or CSI must determine if the petition meets all requirements. If a petitioner disagrees with this determination, they may submit the petition to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for a recount. Once a petition is determined to be valid, the school board or CSI must place consideration of the petition on the agenda of the next public meeting.

At the public meeting, all eligible parents and representatives from the school must be given an opportunity for feedback, and the board may propose alternatives to the parent-specified reforms. Petitioners may agree to amend or withdraw the petition. If the petition is not withdrawn, the school board or CSI must vote to approve or disapprove the requested reforms. If the board disapproves the petition, petitioners may submit the request to the SBE and seek a recall election of school board members.

If a local board or CSI fails to approve and adopt a plan to implement the parent-specified reforms within 30 days, petitioners can appeal to the SBE, which may compel the district or CSI to implement the parent-specified reforms, or other reforms as selected by the SBE.

State Expenditures

The bill increases expenditures and workload in the CDE for each petition that must be recounted for validity. Verifying signatures or validating a petition is not currently a role for the CDE, and the department will need to create a new process to recount and review parent signatures. The bill also increases costs for the SBE to conduct additional hearings to consider parent-specified reforms for a school district or the CSI that has rejected a parent petition. It is unknown how many petitions might be referred to the department by petitioners for a recount, or to the SBE for reconsideration of reforms. Should the department receive more than three per year or incur expenses that are no longer absorbable, the CDE will need to seek additional resources through the annual budget process.

School District

For each successful petition, school districts will incur costs to verify the validity of petitions, conduct public hearings, and if parent-specified reforms are approved, implement reforms, which may include safety and discipline protocols, alternative curricula, staff changes, or other actions to improve low-performing schools, such as restructuring schools and management. Since the number of successful petitions is unknown, these costs cannot be estimated.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education Law School Districts